

Sources

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

29 April 1985

Afghanistan: Resistance Support to the Local Population []

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Summary

Some insurgent groups in Afghanistan have attempted to retain and build support from the local population in their areas of operation by supporting food production and distribution system, operating schools, providing medical and other services, and even organizing local governments. The groups who provide the most in the way of such services appear to be those with ethnic or other established ties in their areas, and who have organized a base of civilian support. []

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Food Production and Distribution

The local population is the primary source of food for the insurgents. Some commanders, for example Panjsher Valley commander Ahmad Shah Masood, pay the locals for food supplies; others promise to pay. Some groups, however, steal food from villagers, and some even destroy crops of farmers who do not support them. []

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This memorandum was prepared by [] the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis with a contribution from [] the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. It was coordinated with the Office of Soviet Analysis and the Directorate of Operations. Information as of 29 April 1985 was used in its preparation. Comments and queries are welcome and may be addressed to the Chief, South Asia Division, []

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State Dept. review completed

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6.5 Some insurgent groups are trying to increase food production, mainly to ensure their own supply, but in the process are providing local farmers with security and services. Insurgents have assisted farmers--particularly in Wardak and Qandahar Provinces--by helping repair canals and planting and harvesting crops. Local commanders have also encouraged refugees in Pakistan to return and farm their land when the weather was favorable. 25X1

4 A representative from the Mahaz-i-Milli-Islami resistance organization told the US Consul in Peshawar in August of 1984 that his group had set up an Afghan Food Supply Organization in Quetta. The organization was planning to cultivate 15,000 hectares in northern Helmand Province controlled by the resistance. Private western donors sent two tractors and 500 kilograms of seed to Pakistan for the project. 25X1

Medical Care

1 We believe that insurgent medical services focus on treating wounded fighters. [redacted] despite the increase in Afghans now medically trained, few have treated civilians. Care is primitive except when foreign doctors provide the services--and sometimes even then. 25X1

1 Insurgents transport doctors, most of whom are French or other foreigners, and provide security and a place to practice, particularly to the eastern provinces and Wardak Province. Foreign doctors in Afghanistan are most concerned with treating the civilian population, training Afghan nurses and first aid workers, and bringing serum to inoculate children against tuberculosis and measles: 25X1

1 -- The director of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, which funds some medical work in Afghanistan, told the US Embassy in 1983 that it had set up nine mobile clinics, eight in the eastern provinces. 25X1

2 -- Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), a French-run medical organization, operates primarily in northeastern Afghanistan in Laghman, Badakhshan, Balkh, and Paktia Provinces.

17 -- In Herat City insurgents operate three clinics with 35 beds and a staff of 19 trained medical personnel, and a training facility where doctors teach first aid. 25X1

13 The number of European doctors inside Afghanistan has declined in recent years. MSF ceased operations in the Hazarehjat because the insurgents who had been hired to protect the doctors extorted money, commandeered vehicles, and insisted that insurgents be treated before civilians, [redacted] MSF prefers to provide service in northern Afghanistan because the area's insurgent groups are less prone to infighting than the insurgents in southern Afghanistan. 25X1

1 Still, insurgents are receiving increasing medical training. Red Cross officials told US diplomats that 1,250 Afghans took a one-day first aid course, and 79 took a four-week paramedic course between October 1984 and February 1985; 20 Afghan paramedics recently completed a one-year course, [redacted] Several Afghans learned surgical procedures from French doctors in the Panjsher Valley and treated insurgents and civilians after a Soviet offensive drove the doctors out of the valley. 25X1

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Education

1 The insurgents have established schools, mostly for religious training. Most Afghans distrust nonreligious education, viewing it as corrupting to their young and teaching concepts contrary to local tradition:

11 -- The Jamiat has about 30 schools that teach reading and religion and indoctrinate children in antiregime and pro-Jamiat propaganda near the city of Balkh.

16,17 -- Herat Province insurgent councils, under the leadership of Jamiat commander Ismail Khan, run schools in their areas.

2 -- A French official reported observing resistance schools in the Hazarehjat, Mazar-e Sharif, and Laghman, Paktia and Badakshan Provinces.

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1 The schools, run by local mullahs, lack instructional materials. [redacted]

Media

7,8,9 Insurgents have increased their use of media for propaganda and entertainment, but their efforts are still small. Three clandestine radios broadcast criticism of Soviet and Afghan regime policy, and the resistance also distributes cassette recordings. [redacted] tapes distributed by Panjsher insurgents are popular, but scarce. One group of insurgents claims it publishes a newspaper in Baghlan Province featuring general news, insurgent operations, and criticism of the Afghan regime. [redacted]

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Other Services

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1 In some areas the insurgents have worked with the population to establish local governments. Jamiat-i-Islami commanders have successfully established local governments in at least three regions:

1 -- The Tajiks of the Panjsher Valley under Masood created a functioning local government by 1982, despite intense Soviet military pressure, but the population evacuated the area prior to the 1984 spring Soviet offensive and has not returned.

10,11 -- Zabiullah Khan established "commands" in Balkh Province with responsibilities for education, health, and political affairs. He also helped resettle villagers forced from their homes by Soviet and regime military operations.

16,17 -- Ismail Khan heads a Provincial Council that addresses financial, religious, agricultural, and medical issues in Herat Province. [redacted]

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1 Groups in several areas collect taxes to support the insurgency. Some taxes are levied quasi-officially by the insurgent governments; others are exacted as an insurgent group moves through an area. Villages sometimes complain they are taxed by more than one insurgent group. [redacted]

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6 [redacted] the Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami and Hizbi Islami (Gulbuddin faction) were taxing families with sons who worked abroad. [redacted]

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1 The most fully developed local government was a council of tribal leaders headed by Syed Ali Beheshti, which operated in the Hazara area of central Afghanistan from 1979 to 1984. It collected taxes, administered justice, maintained the Hazara military force, and attempted to conduct foreign policy. The Hazaras, Mongol Shias in a predominantly Caucasian Sunni country, had long resented their second-class status in Afghanistan. Recent aggressive actions by militant pro-Iranian groups (Sazman-i-Nasr and Sepah-e Pasdaran) have severely restricted the area controlled by the Council. [redacted]

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